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OPERATIONS GROUP FILE

Middle East Coverage

11 FEB 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH: Deputy Director for Science and Technology

FROM:
Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service

SUBJECT: Soviet Broadcasts to Middle East-South
Asian Countries

REFERENCE: DCI Memo to D/FBIS, dated 4 February 1980,
Same Subject

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1. This memorandum responds to your request for information on Soviet foreign-language broadcasts to the Middle East and South Asian countries. Included is a brief assessment of the content of Soviet broadcasts to the area. The charts in Tabs A and B list the languages, the number of hours broadcast in each language, transmitter usage, and the weekly output by language and target area. FBIS coverage is also noted.

2. Moscow broadcasts extensively to the countries of the Middle East and South Asia through the facilities of its regular Radio Moscow International Service, and international services of four of the Soviet republics, the unofficial Radio Peace and Progress, and the clandestine National Voice of Iran. These broadcasts are carried primarily on shortwave frequencies although some mediumwave is also used. By far the heaviest broadcast effort directed toward a specific country is aimed at India, with more than 110 hours of programming carried per week in 12 languages. Broadcasts to the Arab World and the countries of the Near and Middle East, including Iran and Afghanistan, total over 300 hours per week in various languages, including Persian, Dari, Pashto, Arabic, Turkish, Azerbaijani, Kurdish and Armenian.

3. The basic contents of Radio Moscow's international service programming to the Middle East and South Asia, as to any other region, consist of news, commentary and features dealing with a

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variety of Soviet domestic and international developments. Subjects range from political, economic and trade affairs to science, culture, education, sports and so forth. The primary purpose of Soviet media is to publicize Soviet achievements and convey the Soviet position on current international issues. The international service, like the other media, publicizes major Soviet statements and leadership speeches which set forth Moscow's policies. Radio replays of central press articles and radio commentaries and features are used to amplify and reinforce the official line.

4. Broadcasts to specific target audiences may touch on topics which are not mentioned, or are selectively discussed, in other foreign-language beams or in broadcasts for the Soviet domestic audience. Broadcasts in the language of a specific target country--such as Turkish to Turkey or Persian to Iran--reflect the status of Soviet relations with that country. When seeking to project an image of friendship with a state, Moscow stresses the benefits of bilateral economic or other cooperation, as it has been doing with Iran. Disapproval of a country's policies, such as Turkey's NATO membership, is often conveyed by quoting criticism from that country's own press or prominent personalities.

5. As distinct from the official Radio Moscow, there is the purportedly "unofficial" "Radio Peace and Progress" which uses Radio Moscow facilities but claims sponsorship by Soviet public organizations representing journalists, writers, composers, youth and other groups. This enables the radio to pose as the voice of Soviet public opinion rather than of the government. The themes addressed are standard ones following the official line, but Radio Peace and Progress broadcasts are often notably more tendentious and outspoken than those of Radio Moscow since the government ostensibly does not bear responsibility for program content.

6. Falling in a separate category is the clandestine radio, the Baku-based "National Voice of Iran." The Soviet Union has never publicly acknowledged the existence of "National Voice," the only clandestine transmitter broadcasting from the Soviet Union to the Middle East. National Voice programs--in Persian, repeated in Azerbaijani--basically promote Soviet foreign policy objectives but are typically more strident in their "anti-imperialist" invective than Radio Moscow. The radio, which was consistently anti-shah, has been paying lip service to the

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policies of Ayatollah Khomeyni. Like the official Soviet media, National Voice does not promote separatism for Iran's nationalities, but professes sympathy for the minorities' demands for cultural and other rights within a territorially integral Iran. (There are two clandestine radios broadcasting in Turkish--"Our Radio" and "The Voice of the Turkish Communist Party"--but these use facilities in East Germany rather than the Soviet Union.)

7.. All portions are CONFIDENTIAL.



Attachments:
As Stated

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